

City of Cambridge

The City Council Committee on Civil and Human Rights, conducted a public meeting on Wednesday, January 9, 1991 beginning at 5:15 p. m. in the Ackermann Room. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss a new affirmative action plan. Members present were Mayor Alice Wolf, Vice Mayor Kenneth Reeves and City Clerk Joseph Connarton.

Mayor Wolf opened the meeting by welcoming all present and stated it was her hope and desire that at the conclusion of this meeting the Committee would come up with any further amendments and suggestions they may have after reviewing the documents distributed at this meeting and on previous mailings.

These documents included:

- * A reinstatement of Affirmative Action Policy by the Mayor
- * Memorandum dated January 3, 1991 from Susan Dowds and Janice Platner.
- * Memorandum dated January 8, 1991 from Nancy Ryan
- * Draft Affirmative Action Plan dated 1/4/91.

Copies of the above documents are herewith incorporated by reference. The Mayor further stated she had reviewed the draft A. A. plan and made some recommendations not all of which have been incorporated within the document.

The Committee then heard from Michael Gardner, Personnel Director for the City of Cambridge who provided an overview of the current affirmative action plan which was first adopted in 1977 and amended in 1979. He outlined a series of statistics which are used as benchmarks for monitoring compliance with the plan. Furthermore he informed the Committee that a final draft agreed upon by the Committee would ultimately require approval by the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.(MCAD). Mr. Gardner stated that an affirmative action plan should be used as a management tool for both city officials and citizens to determine the City's compliance with the plan.

The Committee then heard from Susan Dowds, 48 Banks Street, Cambridge, a member of the goals committee which had met several times to develop a goal setting agenda for the affirmative action plan. Ms. Dowds re-affirmed what Mr. Gardner said stating that the final document needs to be in compliance with the MCAD.

Ms. Dowds further stated she had great concerns over the fact that Federal contract compliance insists that all eight factors as outlined on page 3 in her memorandum dated 1/3/91 (copy attached) be taken into consideration of minority and female availability. Furthermore she stated that the Committee did not feel they had a clear understanding within the document relative to the definition of a department head. She also stated they were waiting to receive from the Personnel Department, a position by position listing along with salaries.

Finally she stated she would like to see a citizens committee put in place which would oversee the hiring of municipal employees; a committee she said, which should not be a rubber stamp.

The Committee then heard from Janice Platner, Executive Director of the Human Rights Committee, who stated that she firmly believed that the policy governing sexual harassment should be separate from the affirmative action plan; the plan should make only a general reference to sexual harassment.

Mayor Wolf stated that possibly a separate ordinance could be drafted covering the issue.

Nancy Ryan, Executive Director of the Women's Committee stated she believed it could be done either by ordinance or executive order; whatever would be viewed as being consistent with other municipalities.

Vice Mayor Reeves questioned whether or not any targeting was being done within the community to determine the percentage of overall minority presence.

Mr. Gardner responded by stating 50% of minority employees reside within the community. The Vice Mayor stated he hoped the City would be looking at goals and objectives as it relates to local hiring. Mr. Gardner responded by stating that in addition to federal regulations, the state has also developed regulations which are linked to local hiring being used as criteria for eligibility for state grants. He further outlined to the committee the state formula used to determine utilization data for the city work force.

He stated he was using the Cambridge resident workforce as the yardstick for this type of analysis which is higher than that of Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (S.M.S.A.).

The Vice Mayor questioned what is the relevance of the pool of resources to the goal we set?

Mayor Wolf responded by stating that the goal should be based on population, but the committee has been informed that would be illegal. The Vice Mayor questioned who the two minority department heads were which were referred to previously during this evenings discussion.

Mr. Gardner responded by stating the individuals in question were Assessor Faith McDonald and Malvina Monteiro, Executive Secretary of the Police Civilian Review Board.

Vice Mayor Reeves commented further on the significant resources to training and scholarship programs and questioned what it all meant in terms of the work force.

Mr. Gardner responded by stating the loan/scholarship program has thus far been utilized with members of Local Union #195 who wish to attend professional advancement seminars; specifically for those employees within the union who are working at either the Cambridge Hospital or the Neville Manor Nursing Home.

The Committee then heard from Robert Buckley, 58 Wendall Street, Cambridge who stated that people within the municipal workforce must be reflective of the residents of the city.

Furthermore he stated that he believed there is something missing in terms of people working together throughout the city.

The Committee then heard from Sylvia Saavedra-Keber, 4 Cornelius Way, Cambridge, a member of the Human Rights Commission who stated that the draft affirmative action plan provided for protective class employees to use their native language.

Furthermore she stated that the committee should wait an additional month to obtain the 1990 census figures which could then be plugged into the final draft of the new affirmative action plan.

The Vice Mayor stated he thought that page 16 of the draft affirmative action plan may need to be amended by adding appropriate language which would articulate what the process will be if individuals have not complied with the language in paragraph 2 relative maintaining a commitment to fulfilling the goals of the plan.

Mayor Wolf suggested the following action:

- * That the goal committee meet one more time in an effort to finalize some pending issues
- * The Personnel Director review the sexual^b harassment policy statement.
- * The statistics based on the 1980 census should be added to the final draft and replaced as soon as the 1990 numbers are ready.
- * The City Manager should review the position, duties and work area of the Affirmative Action Officer.

The Mayor scheduled the next meeting, of the Committee for
Thursday, February 7, 1991 at 5:30 p.m.

The hearing was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

For the Committee

Alice K. Wolf (sig)

Mayor Alice K. Wolf, Chair

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report from the Civil and Human Rights Committee for a hearing held on Wednesday, January 9, 1991 to discuss a new Affirmative Action Plan.

In City Council,

January 28, 1991

*Report accepted
Placed on file*